CIA Supports Bengali Elite

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At long last—a television war. Every night we watched to see who was winning, to count casualties, and to give thanks that we wouldn't have to fight. And, after a few weeks, it *ended*. Indian troops occupy Bangladesh attempting "to keep the peace" and disarm the Bengali guerrilla forces. Sheik Mujibur Rahman, the President of Bangladesh, is freed from a West Pakistan jail after nine months of imprisonment and is returning home.

Why did it happen? What now? When Indian policy-makers decided to intervene in East Bengal (East Pakistan or Bangladesh) this November, they were responding to a series of economic and political crises. Though masses of anti-Moslem, anti-Pakistani Indians had been demonstrating in the streets since March, the war fever only made it easier for Indian leaders to go to war.

Refugee Burden

Ten million East Bengali refugees now living in India have been a tremendous burden on the Indian economy. Resources, including foreign aid originally intended for India, have been reallocated for the refugees. The total expenditure on refugees this fiscal year will be at least 20% of the entire Indian budget.

Mrs. Gandhi's government was worried about the potential political explosiveness of the ten million refugees. India feared that the Bangladesh struggle would spill over into an already unstable West Bengal. John P. Lewis, formed AID director in India and the chief South Asian adviser to Senator Edward Kennedy, reports that "refugees from East Pakistan, who have entered eastern India in several surges beginning in 1947, have tended to join extremist political factions...."

Worker's Rebellion

Discontent among the natives of West Bengal (the Indian province surrounding Calcutta) also threatens the authority of the Indian government. West Bengal landowners and employers have hired many of the refugees, lowering wages and forcing many Indians out of work in an area with already sizable unemployment. While there have been reports of clashes between native wage-earners and refugees, the real threat to India is the specter of a rebellion by West Bengali workers.

India has tried to contain the refugees in isolated camps. The government even hired several thousand young men to try curbing extremist agitation in and around the refugee camps. Indian officials contended that the refugees should return to their homes, but the bulk of the refugees would not return so long as Pakistani troops occupied East Bengal. And as long as the refugees remain in India, they are a political liability for Mrs. Gandhi's government.

On the other hand, a pro-Indian Bangladesh government will be an asset to India's economy. Before independence in 1948, Indian businessmen in Calcutta ran the East Bengal jute trade. Until 1965 West Bengal (India) traded extensively and profitably with East Pakistan. Now Calcutta businessmen hope to resume old business ties.

One of India's motives for invading was fear of the growing leadership of local leftists in the Bangladesh liberation movement. These groups—virtually ignored by the American press—wished to create a socialist Bangladesh, independent of India as well as Pakistan. Even before the Pakistani civil war began in March, 1971, the East Pakistan Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) had organized guerrilla bands, killed several landlords, and distributed land to the peasants. Just before the Indian invasion the *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported fierce fighting between the Maoists and the Awami-League-backed guerrillas in East Bengal.

Armed Guerrillas

Today, the guerrillas—most of them are not Maoists—equipped with light machine guns, sten guns, and other small arms are refusing to surrender their weapons to the Awami League government or its Indian Army allies. The Mukti Bahini control many areas of Bangladesh, including the banks, the offices, and the local treasury. A large proportion of the guerrillas are students who are radicalized and want the struggle to be carried to its logical end. They do not want any "going back" on their revolution.

"We want an exploitation-free, socialist, democratic society with social ownership over modes of production," one of them told a reporter.

The Awami League elite, which basked in the sunshine of the Mukti Bahini's guerrilla operations, is now in power after nine months in the relative comfort of exile, in India. They do not relish such talk. They want the guerrillas to be disarmed before the Indian Army withdraws from the country.

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U.S. agents pressuring Bangla Desh

By SADHAN MUKHERJEE

NEW DELHI, India, Aug. 31 (By airmail) — The U.S. is reportedly using the case of Bangla Desh leader Mujibur Rahman, now under so-called trial in West Pakistan, as a bait to blackmail the leaders of the Bangla Desh Government. Iran is the go-between, and its representatives have already contacted Bangla Desh representatives for a "settlement."

The main proposal is that Bangla Desh give up its claim for "independence." Bangla Desh leaders argue such a compromise would amount to a betrayal to the cause for which so much blood has been shed, especially when the freedom fighters are dealing heavy blows against the military junta. Mujibur Rahman himself has declared that if necessary a free Bangla Desh "will rise on his dead body."

Several U.S. organizations have become active among the intellectuals who have fled from Bangla Desh and taken shelter in India. One such organization, the International Rescue Committee, headed by Mrs. Oswald Lord, is reported to be spending some $24,000 per month. It is already paying handsome "allowances" to some 55 intellectuals from Bangla Desh "for research work" and to 10 artists "for holding exhibitions."

This organization was active among the Cuban counter-revolutionaries and also among emigre Hungarians. Mrs. Lord is known to have links with the CIA.